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UNCLAS ABUJA 001613

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NIGERIAN STATEMENT ON GUINEA-BISSAU COUP

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INTRANET OR INTERNET.

1. (SBU) ECOWAS sent a fact-finding team to discuss the coup with coup leaders, and the press reports the team returned and sent a report to ECOWAS member states September 16 for their action. The British High Commission tells us Nigerian MFA MinState Samaila went, but they did not know whether he was with the ECOWAS group or separate. Nigeria has already commented publicly (text below), and at this point it is unclear how the coup will affect ECOWAS and its Guinea-Bissau contingent on the ground in Liberia.

NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

2. (U) Begin Text:

The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has learnt, with alarm, of the reported coup d'etat in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and the detention of the constitutionally elected president. The Government of Nigeria strongly condemns this unconstitutional act by the Guinea-Bissau military. The Government of Nigeria wishes to remind the perpetrators of this unconstitutional act that it was the same circumstances in 1998, which led to very disastrous circumstances for the Republic of Guinea-Bissau and from which both the country and its citizens are yet to fully recover.

The Government of Nigeria further regards this latest coup d'etat as ill-timed and ill-advised, coming almost on the eve of parliamentary and presidential elections, which would have enabled the people of Guinea-Bissau to freely exercise their inalienable right of choosing their leader.

Finally, the Government of Nigeria calls on the perpetrators of this unconstitutional act to immediately reverse it, release the constitutionally elected president and the other detainees, so that preparations for a free and fair election can resume.

End Text.

MEECE